

The Sun

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If our friends who favor us with manuscripts for publication will have repeated articles returned they must in all cases send stamps for that purpose.

The Panama Canal.

The right contractor gets the award. He is the most energetic, most responsible, most efficient, most trustworthy, most scrupulously honest and most perfectly equipped of all the competitors for the great task, with its burdens and honors. His name is SAMUEL, and we record with peculiar gratification the circumstance that this same SAMUEL has been THE SUN's only candidate for the job.

Twenty-three Months After.

It is only twenty-two, or, exactly speaking, just about twenty-three months, since certain investigators began an investigation of which the scope of inquiry was officially defined. The sixth object of specific inquiry was thus stated:

"All dealings since January 1, 1900, of any kind by which any broker or brokers of firm or corporation or individual has sold to or for the society the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States) any stocks, bonds or securities, or property of any kind.

"If in any way any employee (including officers, directors and trustees of the society) received any compensation or benefit from any such transaction.

"If in any way any officer, director, trustee or employee of the society has by reason of and because he was in such relation to the society received from or because of any such transaction any money or other thing of value."

We are quoting from the memorable prospectus of the Frick committee of investigation, so called. One of the members of the Frick investigating committee was Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN. One of the "officers, directors or employees" under investigation by the Frick-Harriman investigating committee likewise was Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN.

There may be students of ancient history who still remember that after two or three months of assiduous research the Harriman-Frick investigating committee produced a voluminous report which was very strong concerning the increase of salaries by the Alexander crowd and some other intimate inquiries, but as vague as a forgotten dream concerning any such dealings since January, 1900, as were discussed in the sixth article of plan and scope, by which Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN might have profited. It may also be remembered, by archaeologists if by none else, that this masterpiece of exoneration and acquittal went to the public over Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN's own signature.

In the testimony of Mr. EDWARD H. HARRIMAN on Monday before the Interstate Commerce Commission, a tribunal which has nothing to do with the fiduciary finance of the life insurance system, there is the following reference to an alleged sale of \$1,000,000 of Chicago and Alton bonds to the Equitable Life Assurance Society in August, 1900, ostensibly by Kuhn, Loeb & Co., but really by a syndicate consisting of Mr. EDWARD H. HARRIMAN, Mr. MORTIMER SCHIFF, Mr. GEORGE J. GOULD and Mr. JAMES STILLMAN, at a price about 50 per cent. higher than that at which these gentlemen, as railroad financiers, had issued the said securities to themselves a short time previously:

"Q. Did you sell or did the syndicate sell to the Equitable Life Assurance Company a million of those bonds in August, 1900? A. That I don't know.

"Q. For \$2? A. That I don't know.

"Q. Did you hear about it? A. I don't know whether I do or not.

Has an ironical fate decreed that whether Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN did or did not—a question which Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN failed to determine two years ago when he was sitting in the seat of judgment on this very transaction—is now to be ascertained from the lips of Mr. E. H. HARRIMAN as a reluctant and badgered occupant of the witness stand?

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The author of "Evangeline," who was born a century ago to-day, still keeps the distinction of being not only the best known American poet, but one of the most popular lyrists that English speaking peoples have produced. He is relatively little read on the Continent of Europe, for, although he was himself an admirable translator, his own writings have seldom been translated into foreign languages. In England, on the other hand, as the sales of his poems prove, he continues to command a larger audience than is reached by any other English poet of his time. There are indications that his hold on sympathy and his mastery of the gentler emotions will outlast TENNYSON'S.

Had he been a homekeeping youth the descendant of JOHN ALDER and of PRISCILLA, "the Puritan maiden," would no doubt have done such work as would have caused him to be acclaimed the laureate of Colonial and Revolutionary times, but he would have missed one characteristic charm of his poetry, much of which is steeped in mediæval tradition. As a matter of fact, his experience was for his day most unusual, for when at the age of 22 he undertook the post of professor of modern languages at Bowdoin College he had devoted three and a half years to travel and study in many European countries, including France, Spain and Italy, as well as Germany, Holland and England. Saturated with exotic thought and feeling at an impressionable and plastic age, he might have been expected to find himself out of place in the somewhat homely

and austere New England of seventy-five years ago. Instead of repelling and chilling his fellow countrymen, however, he fascinated them by the haunting strangeness of his melody, and more than any American of his time must be credited with promoting the dissemination of culture as distinguished from classical learning. The renaissance, however, of the form and spirit of the past, at which he aimed in many of his early lyrics and which culminated in "The Golden Legend," must be held to have constituted, on the whole, a minor part of his achievement. It is by his treatment of themes suggested by his native land, "Evangeline," "The Song of Hiawatha," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," which are suffused with local sentiment and local color, that he is likely to be longest remembered.

It is the combination of a sweet and delicate art with unswerving moral purity and a high ethical purpose that accounts for LONGFELLOW'S phenomenal and abiding popularity. He is preeminently the poet of good men and good women; and, happily for civilization, they far outnumber the bad. He was no metaphysician and no scientist. Unlike TENNYSON, he never tried to spell out the relations of man to his Maker, or to unlock the secrets of the cosmos. He was a liberal Christian of the old fashioned Unitarian type; that is to say, he was tortured with no doubts, and was content to find in the New Testament the guide of life. His aim was to make his readers not wiser, but better; and an instinctive comprehension of the fact has drawn them to him with tender and unshakable affection. He was too clear sighted and humble minded to account himself the peer of the "grand old masters"; much less one of "those far stars that come in sight once in a century."

He did trust, however, that it lay in him to "make a purer faith and manhood shine in the untutored heart."

It has been said that LONGFELLOW'S protracted and repeated sojourns in Europe unfitted him to interpret the new life of the American republic; that by his dreamy and pensive temperament he was rather a reviver of the past than a moulder of the present or a prophet of the future. Those who take this view of LONGFELLOW, however, overlook his "Poems on Slavery," which played no inconsiderable part in rousing the youth of the North to a quivering sense of the wrong which lay upon the national conscience. It must, however, be admitted that only upon that occasion did he put on the armor of the reformer; for the most part he is a placid homilist, whose utterance flows in lyrics or in hymns. He never strove to terrify or electrify, but was content to elicit sympathy and to wind around the heart.

The Wreck of the Chicago and Alton.

Last Monday, before the Interstate Commerce Commission, Mr. EDWARD H. HARRIMAN, on the witness stand, gave the story of the successful manipulation of the property of the Chicago and Alton Railroad by him and his associates—a story which has not only astounded this community, but which must, in its extraordinary revelations cause, grave alarm and even consternation throughout the civilized world.

Mr. HARRIMAN tells us that in conjunction with three associates, Messrs. MORTIMER SCHIFF, GEORGE J. GOULD and JAMES STILLMAN, in 1899, he obtained possession of 97 per cent. of the stock of the Chicago and Alton Railroad Company. This railroad was then capitalized at about \$39,000,000, and had a bonded debt of only eight and a half or nine millions. Each member of the syndicate acquired 5,435 shares of the stock. These men, constituting the syndicate and controlling the railroad, immediately placed a mortgage of forty millions upon the property and sold thirty-two millions of these bonds in the main to themselves, at sixty-five cents on the dollar or \$650 a bond. Later some of these bonds were sold in the open market at over 90—ten millions being taken by the New York Life Insurance Company at 96, and one million in August, 1900, by the Equitable at 92, the members of the syndicate thus making about \$300 on each bond. Almost immediately after the acquisition of the property by the syndicate, a dividend of 30 per cent. on the capital stock was declared, and on May 7, 1900, this dividend, amounting to \$6,000,000, was paid.

Mr. HARRIMAN further admits that from the time he and his associates bought the railroad until last October, when he got out, the railroad's capital or debt to bondholders and stockholders had been increased to \$122,873,327; that of this only \$22,500,000 had been invested in the property itself, and there was therefore some sixty millions of water in the new capitalization.

Who was responsible for the declaration of the dividend of thirty per cent. and for the overcapitalization? According to Mr. HARRIMAN'S confession, he and his associates, for he said "Yes, we four men were the Chicago and Alton." What was the excuse offered for the payment of the thirty per cent. dividend? It seems that for years before the syndicate got control of the railroad whatever had been spent in the way of betterments or improvements had been charged against income, and that such account had been closed and the money charged off each year by the board of directors. When the Harriman syndicate gobbled up the stock it was found that \$12,444,000 spent on betterments during a long anterior period—money expended in the proper maintenance of the road—could be made available to the new syndicate by a juggle in bookkeeping, and so this money, already expended, was carried to capital account, and the dividend was issued for the benefit of the new syndicate, ostensibly to recoup stockholders for their lost dividends. As Mr. HARRIMAN said to the commission, "What difference does it make whether it is original stockholders or stockholders then in existence?" thus showing his moral perception of the propriety of altering accounts or changing disbursements to invested capital for the benefit of new stockholders.

While as a general rule a dividend belongs to the one who is the owner of the stock at the time the dividend is actually

declared, and a stockholder has no claim to a dividend until it is declared, and until that time the dividend belongs to the corporation, yet there can be found no authority in law or in equity justifying or extenuating mortgaging a railroad for the purpose of paying an ostensible dividend out of the proceeds of the bonds sold. Money earned by a corporation remains the property of the corporation, and does not become the property of the stockholders until it is distributed among them by the corporation, which may deal with it either as profits of its business or as addition to its capital. There must always be a fair and honest administration of the whole property and business, and the courts can intervene and control whenever there is fraud or bad faith on the part of the directors.

Only from the earnings of the corporation and only from the net profits can dividends be declared, and no dividend can be declared legally when it has not been earned.

Here there is not even a pretence that the thirty per cent. dividend had been earned, and every surrounding circumstance and every existing condition cried out against the declaration of the dividend. The syndicate had burdened the railroad with new overcapitalization; it had encumbered the property by a new issue of bonds more than four times in excess of the former bonded debt. What has been the result? In 1899 we find the road with a total capitalization in stocks and bonds of thirty-nine millions of dollars. Mr. HARRIMAN left it last October capitalized for nearly \$123,000,000, and according to the *Financial Chronicle*, on the first of January last the reorganized railway, although its assets had been only increased by the little railroad known as the St. Louis, Peoria & Northern, owed in bonds, stock and notes nearly \$157,000,000.

We know of no instance in the history of railroad management in this country or in any other country so daring in conception and so audacious in execution. Dividends should be declared dependent upon the profits of each particular year, and accumulated earnings held by a corporation are part of its corporate property, and the interest therein is capital and not income. When directors act in good faith three courses are open to them, according to the Supreme Court of the United States. A corporation may distribute its earnings at once to the stockholders as income, or it may reserve part of its earnings of a prosperous year to make up for a possible lack of profits in future years, or it may accumulate portions of its earnings and invest them in its own plant so as to increase the permanent value of its property. But the underlying principle is that in every instance dividends shall be declared only from the interest or net profits earned and actually received.

The enormous dividend declared had not been earned—no part of it was net profit. But it was, in fact, an appropriation of the capital of the corporation under the guise of the declaration of a dividend. As to its moral aspect there can be but one opinion. The acquisition of a railroad in the manner portrayed by Mr. HARRIMAN, the enormous overcapitalization admitted and confessed, and the appropriation of the moneys of the corporation itself by the underselling of the bonds to the syndicate on the one hand, and the declaration of an unearned dividend on the other hand, are absolutely inconsistent with any code of ethics or business morality, and are indefensible from the standpoint of business integrity and of good faith in corporate management.

Is there any penalty for the admitted wrong?

Most of our States have statutes, penal in their nature, which prohibit the declaration of dividends out of the capital of a corporation or except from net profits or net earnings.

It would seem unfortunate that in any State and in any community such transactions, which strike against one's moral sense and alarm all thinking people, should go unpunished.

Preparing for the Worst.

The Hon. TRUMAN NEWBERY, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, does well to spare neither time nor effort during his winter cruise in Southern waters. It is of the highest importance that the heads of the department should be familiar with our yards, docks and land batteries from New York to Key West and from Key West to New Orleans, to say nothing of Porto Rico, Cuba and other points of interest lying within the circuit of a leisurely and salubrious itinerary.

We live in perilous times, our international assiduousness are numerous and irritating. Distant frowns and scowls are as plentiful as blackberries against a Southern fence. The countercheck quarrelsome hovers on the edge of every foreign shore. It is well that the Honorable Assistant Secretary should equip himself to grapple with the worst, no matter at what cost of personal discomfort through long confinement to the Government yacht Mayflower, or at what peril of the Caribbean billows.

We have endeavored to follow the cruise, and with the aid of various local society columns have achieved at least what our French friends neatly describe as a *succès d'estime*. Mr. NEWBERY seems to have made a close and earnest study of all the stations thus far visited. Our latest authentic information is derived from that excellent Cuban newspaper *La Lucha*, in a recent edition of which we find the announcement that the Mayflower entered the port of Havana on the day before. Nor did Mr. NEWBERY content himself with running an enlightened eye over the military situation there. *La Lucha* tells us further that a certain distinguished Major-General who has been in Havana some months called upon the Assistant Secretary, in other words boarded the Mayflower, and remained with its august occupant "until a late hour." We challenge denial of our assertion that Havana is a point of the utmost consequence. Its climate at this season is far superior to that of St. Augustine or Palm Beach. The theatres are frequent and amusing. There is a gay

and cosmopolitan society. And the chefs of the *Passaje* and the *Trotcha* (at Vedado) have a trick in respect of soft shell crabs and "sopa de macarrones" that would have made BRILLAT-SAVARIN himself burst into song.

But who shall say that San Juan, Porto Rico, is not also a halcyon point of warlike observation? Are the alligator pear and the *châteaubriand aux cèpes bordelais* unknown in that happy, sunlit capital? Our information is to the contrary. And when the Assistant Secretary shall have finally organized his deductions from the entire procession, including Pensacola, Mobile (Frascati) and New Orleans, with its shell roads, lake-side bowers, music, movement and ALCIATORE'S culinary art, we shall expect a proclamation to the effect that our whole Southern seaboard is impregnable, at least during the winter months, and that the very toughest invaders may be counted on to surrender at the first really authoritative overture. It is confidently expected that Assistant Secretary NEWBERY will complete his investigations next summer and to that end brave the asperities of Newport, Narragansett, Boston, Bar Harbor and all the rest of them. And unless the hardships of this winter expedition shall have entirely exhausted him he will come to our rescue and reassurance with bouquets in both hands.

We pretend to no gift of oracle or prophecy, but this much we make bold to promise on the strength of simple, sublimity education.

The Official Report.

In the *Chaplain's Counselor* of February 14, 1906, are printed the "Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Clinton County for the year 1906," an official document the publication of which is required by law, the cost thereof being a charge against the public treasury. The proceedings include such important matters as the "Report of the Committee on Justices and Constables' Accounts," the "Report of the Committee on Miscellaneous Accounts," the "Report of the Committee on Footing Rolls," the "Statement of the Loan Commissioner of Clinton County, to November 1, 1906," and the "Report of the Superintendent of the Poor." These reports and statements, while of great moment within the territory of the political corporation to which they refer, are not of national, or even State, interest. There is, however, one chapter of this chronicle that merits more general circulation than it can have hidden in the dark recesses of an official record. It tells of the lighter, the social side, of official life, and is found under the title "Ninth Day." It reads thus:

"FRIDAY, December 7, 1906.

"Board convened at 9 o'clock A. M. Chairman LAWSON in the chair. Minutes of December 8 read and approved.

SUPERVISORS ENTERTAINED.

"BY SECRETARY OF STATE AND MRS. O'BRIEN at West Chazy.

"The members of the County Board were entertained at dinner last evening by the Hon. and Mrs. J. F. O'BRIEN at their home at West Chazy. The event will be recalled as the most enjoyable incident of the session of 1906. Mayor HYDE and ex-Superintendent TROMBLEY of Altona were also among the guests. The table decorations were red and green, fern leaves, smilax and red carnations being employed. The dinner, which was both artistic and substantial, was served by W. H. CARDANT of the Arcade, this city, which is sufficient on this score.

"Supervisor MENDELSON was unable to be present, but he nevertheless contributed to the merriment of the occasion by sending this despatch to the host:

"I greatly regret that I cannot be with you this evening. Keep your eye on the Supervisor from Schuylers Falls."

"No one enjoyed the rally more than the gentleman from Schuylers Falls, whose unfailing wit contributed to the gaiety of the occasion.

"Secretary Mrs. O'BRIEN was gay and accomplished entertainer, having the happy faculty of making their guests feel at ease every minute while under their roof.

"The Supervisors returned by the late train."

Truly a most refreshing "event" and well worth preservation in the archives of the county of Clinton. Future generations will not be unimformed of the hospitality of Thousand Legged JOHNNY, of the skill of CARDANT, the Arcade caterer, of the wit of Supervisor MENDELSON, or of the good nature of the statesman from Schuylers Falls. Too infrequently do the officials of government record the pleasing entertainments, the amusing recreations, that lighten the heavy burden of their oppressive duties; and too often are the public papers collections of mere formal transactions, transcripts of receipts and expenditures, orders and the like. In centuries to come the student of Clinton history will find other than financial details to reward his inspection of musty volumes and yellowing pamphlets, and bless the Supervisors who left imperishable testimony to the politeness and skill of their host.

The election of CHARLES S. WHITMAN to the presidency of the Board of Magistrates of Manhattan and The Bronx marks an encouraging advance for the betterment of conditions in the police courts of this town. The fact that political motives inspired the Tammany Hall Magistrate to bring about his selection in no way detracts from the importance of the act as a hopeful sign that a need of genuine reform in the administration of these "courts of the people" has been recognized. A peculiarly well fitted man has been chosen for the office.

As to the time it takes to clean an army rifle, concerning which there is much testimony in the investigation by a Senate committee of the Brownsville raid, it may be said that it depends upon whether the gun is to be examined by a company officer at parade. A gun that leaves the faintest suspicion of its owner's hand in its trigger test is not a clean gun.

Representative ARTHUR P. MURPHY of Missouri, whose bill to prohibit tipping in the District of Columbia the House on Monday refused to consider, was swept unwittingly into public life by a plurality of thirty-six on the Roosevelt tidal wave of 1904. Last November Mr. MURPHY succumbed to the Democrat he nosed out two years before. If this astonishing legislator was so soon to be done for, what was he begun for?

The National League of Professional Baseball Clubs at its first meeting today or so ago approved a plan for issuing uniform tickets for the season for its eight clubs. The committee in charge announced that at least 8,000,000 tickets would have to be printed to cover the season. That is for one league only. The American League is fully as important as the National League and draws as great crowds. In the whole country there are hundreds of baseball leagues which play districts not served by the two major organizations. Baseball on the basis of such figures is truly the national game.

In treating Mayor SCHMIDT as "any other defendant charged with crime" Judge DUNNE of San Francisco is strangely unresponsive to the renown of the man who saved the nation.

THE FOOD WAR.

More Views of Imported and Domestic Cookery.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Since I pulled the equality of anti-American Mr. "Voyager" by presuming to defend home industries, permit me to say a few words before leaving the field to the gossamer "gastronomic specialists" (more gas than anything else).

Have never been on a Cook's tour and have no dealing with the American embargoed beef. "Voyager" will have to look back to Paris for that. There's where it is consumed and paid for. Have one of your side-sally French chefs fix it up with a nondescript public, "Voyager" and it will probably suit you as well as a hint of horse. I made no comparison of French horse with New York dairy lurches. The one does not know the other.

If you are a citizen of the United States, Mr. "Voyager," be more American! If not, why not stay abroad if you prefer foreign shores to New York?

Pardon my intruding, Mr. "Voyager," but I am fond of defending things American, and I don't need a spicy French sauce to make my blood boil, either.

Yours New York.

NEW YORK, February 26.

Sala Not a Gourmet.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Will you allow a visiting Englishman to put your correspondent to the test in regard to the Paris restaurant and bon vivant whom he mentions in THE SUN of January 23?

I knew the late George Augustus Sala very well, and I have often been asked to dine and sup together in years gone by. Like many other Londoners he was very fond of restaurant cooking and was a rough and ready judge of good food, but was never known to be in a hurry to possess an eclectic taste for the finer points of the art of the cuisine.

H. ARTHUR LISTER-KAYE.

NEW YORK, February 25.

A Woman's Opinion.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Thanks are due to "Voyager" for opening the eyes of the thousands of us who are not in the habit of reading his "Voyager" and his "Voyager."

His critics have civic pride, but lack his breadth of view, and while "Voyager's" letter was clever, it has been written by some intolerant old crustacean.

My husband and I have lived abroad for many years, and agree with "Voyager" in all he says.

I have been twice to Paris, and give the address of the Paris restaurant of which he spoke.

NEW YORK, February 26.

From a Lover of Homely Cakes.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—The letters of "Voyager" and "Ravigote" arose upon me. Let them come. Were they not taught to eat snails Sunday mornings and brown bread, pork and beans Saturday night?

Do they still hanker for "biled muton and trimmings?"

NEW YORK, February 26.

Chicago Crowded.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—"Heart" and "Voyager" and "Millionaire" and the other debaters of the 4th article make me tired with their birdy views.

I have been traveling all over the world for twenty years and am not arguing, as Whistler said, but telling things to be had in the food line are at the Chicago restaurant. Nowhere else in the world can one get such cream, such steaks and such prunes.

These, I repeat, are not opinions, but facts.

NEW YORK, February 26.

"Ravigote" to "Ravigote."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—I think I know your correspondent "Ravigote"; yes, indeed! I'm sure I know him well! This town is full of his kind. He is a little bit of a snob, but he is as provincial as a village. "Ravigote" has dwelt among us just long enough to become an unreasonable rampant New Yorker. Up to ten years ago he lived at West Aurora and Cortland Counties, near the Corners, or some other thriving town on the State.

When his father struck it rich, "Ravigote" was sent down to learn business in New York and have a fine old time. He has progressed to the half baked man of the world stage.

Why, sir, every night now he dresses for dinner, and he is on easy, familiar terms with the head waiter of the best of every so-called fashionable restaurant in the city. These Olympic games of the cuisine who, according to "Ravigote," have abandoned Paris en masse for New York, live but to eat and drink and to show off their new acquisitions of the West Aurora palate.

"Ravigote" doesn't know or care to know anything about the life of the great cities of this country, or, for that matter, of the capitals of the rest of the civilized world. For him New York is the whole show, and the show's the thing.

Now, if "Ravigote" were presentable I would write him to lunch with me at the Knickerbocker Club or at the Union, both of which have excellent chefs. At luncheon he would have ample time to explain Duxelles and Remoulade sauce, the difference between which he insists I do not know. He could also tell me how to throw a party and best for my particular complaint, which with the tact and politeness of a Tallyrand he describes as a "little sour soup with jaundice and crimp."

"Ravigote," these better things BECHAMEL.

TURKISH PARK, February 26.

A Timely Question.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Having in mind certain riotous going on in your city, I enclosed extract from Scott's "The Fortunes of Nigel" struck me as I read this afternoon as a timely present.

FRYBURN, MASS., February 25.

"So that, though it may have been a good deed to have stuck Lord Dalgarno, being such as he has shown himself, anywhere else, yet it fell under the plain statute, when violence was offered within the verge of the Court. For, let me tell you my Lord, the statute against striking could be twisted into law in our Court, if it could be eluded by justifying the person struck to be a knave. It is much to be lamented that I ken nae Court in Christendom where knaves are not to be found; and if men are to be found, the peace will be broken, and then, why, it will rain Jeddite staves and battie-lanes in our very watchmen."

Rapid Transit in the Subway.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: This morning I reached the platform of the subway at Eighth street and Broadway just too late to catch a downtown local. A wait of four minutes ensued before another local approached the station, whistled derisively and sped on without stopping. A big number of waiting passengers was increasing I walked from one end of the platform to the other and made a careful count, and thereafter kept tabs on all who came through the gates until the following local train drew into the station, eight minutes after the first local had left. Sixty people were waiting to board it. This train was already so crowded that the waiting passengers were obliged to stand, and as an equally large number were taken on at Seventy-ninth street the train was packed before it reached Seventy-second street.

I suppose it is foolish to expect that a public service monopoly will have any consideration for the public, but it would be interesting to know why local trains are run as express past certain stations to the inconvenience of the public. If it were citizens of this town ever wake up and get together it may be possible to force the transportation lines into a proper regard for their patrons. I hope the happy day is not far off.

NEW YORK, February 25.

The Appreciation of Decency.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: It is pleasant to note that that Governor Hughes declares that the average American is a "very decent sort of fellow."

There is no doubt that the average American is a "very decent sort of fellow." Governor Hughes is entitled to the praise for making the distinction between rapid transit and robust view. With this new stamp of approval the average American ought to be pleased.

NEW YORK, February 26.

AMENDING THE CURRENCY ACT.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26.—The amendments to the Currency act now under consideration in the Senate are submitted with no idea that they are either a full or a final adjustment of the currency question. It is not assumed, nor is it urged, that they will cure all the ills of the money market.

The members of the Finance Committee, unanimously, and the various merchants and bankers to whom the matter has been submitted, are in agreement that the proposals are lawful and that they will be beneficial.

The issuance of gold certificates of the denomination of \$10 and an increase in the supply of bills of the denominations of \$1, \$2 and \$5 are proposed with no end in view except that of serving the convenience of the trading public. The present supply of small notes is inadequate and the pending measure provides for an increase without in any way affecting the total volume of currency. Under it notes of high denomination and limited circulation may be retired and replaced by issuing an equal amount in small bills, for which there is an urgent demand. To these provisions no objection has been made.

The amendment which has provoked discussion reads as follows:

All national banking associations, designated for that purpose by the Secretary of the Treasury, shall be authorized to deposit with the Secretary of the Treasury, and they may also be employed as financial agents of the Government; and they shall perform all such duties as may be required of them by the Secretary of the Treasury, and they shall be entitled to receive from the Government, for the faithful performance of their duties, such compensation as the Secretary of the Treasury may determine. Every association so designated as receiver or depository of the public money shall take and receive at par all of the national currency bills by which the Secretary of the Treasury may be authorized to issue for the Government for internal revenue, or for loans or stocks.

Under existing laws our internal revenue receipts may be and are deposited in banks of recognized financial soundness, while our revenues from customs go directly to the Treasury or Sub-Treasuries. The amounts turned in to the various national strong boxes are there held until they are returned to circulation through the ordinary channels of the business of banking and exchange. Their retention in those institutions seriously and needlessly restricts the volume of money in circulation. Neither people nor Government derives any benefit whatever from the large sums held idle in the public treasury. The measure now under discussion places customs receipts on the same footing as internal revenue receipts.

The objections made to this plan do not affect directly the main proposition. They are embodied in a substitute amendment submitted by Senator Nelson of Minnesota. They call for a payment of interest on the deposits so made, assign a definite specification of the nature of the securities given by the depositories, provide in general terms for the distribution of the deposits, and include other matters presumably broadening and strengthening the general plan.

Nelson's substitute contains nothing that has been thoroughly thrashed out in previous discussions on the currency question. In a masterly reply to Senator Nelson's argument, Senator Aldrich made it clear that the outcome of the substitute measure if it should be adopted would be directly the opposite of what its proponent planned and expected.

The so-called Aldrich currency bill will not remedy all the evils of the commercial and financial world, and no such claim is made for it. It should be judged by the good, be it much or little, which it will surely do.

Henry W. Longfellow.